

UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES VISION

By 2035, St. Croix County has worked with the utility companies to ensure appropriate utility corridors for electrical transmission, fiber optics and future technological possibilities. The County has worked with the DOT in Minnesota and Wisconsin to identify future lands appropriate for different types of public transportation, such as rail. The County is leading the way for its residents by making sure its existing buildings are energy efficient and use a LEED process in any new county construction of buildings. The County has reworked its rules to allow for solar and wind generation for private residences and have ensured the right to solar and wind access from adjacent properties.

St. Croix County has community and cultural centers that provide programs for all residents in particular older retirees and youth, and promote ways that active seniors can give their time and knowledge to their communities. The County works with St. Croix's municipalities to make sure that a range of community services are both available and accessible within a reasonable distance of municipal boundaries. The County has worked with municipalities to create a county-wide bicycle path that is useable in many sections in all seasons.

St. Croix County is known for its strong UW-RF and WITC campuses as well as the K-12 school districts. These institutions are known for their innovative teachers and for providing exceptional educational opportunities for all. The schools produce well educated students who are good citizens and involved in many community issues.

Introduction

Utilities and community facilities provide the foundation on which a community is built and maintained. Utilities include sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water systems, and electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, and solid waste disposal systems. Community facilities include parks, schools, health and safety services, and libraries, among other things. Utilities and community facilities contribute to the quality of life in St. Croix County and affect the community's ability to attract and retain residents, visitors, businesses, and industries.

The State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law (§66.1001) requires that comprehensive plans include a "compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the local governmental unit".



Troy Beach, St. Croix County Park

Facilities located in the City of River Falls and Village of Spring Valley, are generally not included here given that these communities are largely located in Pierce County.

Conditions, Trends, and Issue Prioritization

Conditions & Trends

- 2010, there were 16,568 private wastewater treatment systems in St. Croix County. This is an increase of 41 percent in total number of systems over 2000.
- All POWTS are required to be inspected every three years, and most will need to be pumped at that time.
- Since 1999, county staff has worked with towns and households to test drinking water, nearly 3,200 households have participated, that is about 20 percent of the private wells in the county.
- Recyclable materials collected in the County have increased by over 60% from 2000 to 2010.
- St. Croix County has a variety of assisted living facilities. Total capacity in the county as of 2008 was 893 beds.



Hudson Town Hall

Top Issues

- Unique subsurface geologic conditions in St. Croix County may increase the susceptibility of groundwater to contamination in some areas.
- Stormwater flooding has been an increasing concern in St. Croix County.
- Gaps exist for access to broadband and providing fiber optic services.
- Improving emergency services dispatch/response time is always important. Problems with duplicate road names may have to be addressed in the future.
- With the County's aging population, the availability of assisted living facilities, nursing home, and other related services could be a potential issue for the future.

CLINICS AND HOSPITALS IN ST. CROIX COUNTY

LOCATION	FACILITY NAME	APPROX. CAPACITY
Baldwin	Baldwin Area Medical Center	25 beds
	Baldwin Clinic	
Hudson	Hudson Hospital (and Specialty Clinic)	25 beds
	Hudson Physicians (WWMA)	
New Richmond	Westfields (Holy Family) Hospital	25 beds
	Cancer Center Clinic	
	Family Medical Surgical Center	
	New Richmond Clinic (WWMA)	
Somerset	Somerset Clinic (Stillwater Medical Group)	

source: St. Croix County Emergency Management, Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Implications

- It is becoming increasingly important that communities and local service providers consider alternatives and cooperative opportunities to provide needed services. Partnerships are crucial given that many critical community services are provided by private sector or non-profit entities.
- The effectiveness of many services can be improved through county-wide coordination and multi-jurisdictional approaches, such as emergency management planning, recreation planning, and shared public infrastructure.
- Increasing growth will result in increasing demand for services. As municipalities grow and change, the infrastructure, essential services, and related community facilities must evolve as well.

Special Subsections

Review of Existing Facilities

Numerous local, county and regional utilities and community facilities exist within St. Croix County. These utilities and facilities (e.g., health care, emergency services, recycling facilities, telecommunications, electric utilities, child care, libraries, parks, and schools) are listed and discussed in the *St. Croix County Conditions and Trends Report* as well as the *Inventory of Plans, Programs, and Land Use Policies in West Central Wisconsin*.

The rural towns in the County have limited community facilities, often times only a town hall, town shop, cemetery and/or recycling center. Rural towns and small communities often work together or with their larger neighbors to provide emergency services such as ambulance, fire and first responders. The majority of the County's rural population travel to neighboring communities to utilize community services, such as health care, schools and libraries. In addition, many residents in small villages travel to larger incorporated communities or cities to utilize those facilities.

Assessment of Future Needs

As the population is growing fast in the County, there are increasing demands for services and facilities. Moreover, many utilities and community facilities in the County will need to be improved and/or replaced in the near future. This is a result of many aging facilities, new and expanding technology that can upgrade construction, and a focus on more sustainable design. An example of this is an increasing need for senior housing due to the aging population of the County. Opportunities for greater local, county or regional approaches, for various facilities are addressed in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element of this plan.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: *Protect public health and land and water resources through proper wastewater treatment, stormwater management and management and disposal of solid waste and recycling.*

Objectives:

- 1.1 Protect the county's public health, natural environment, groundwater and surface water resources, air, land and other natural resources through proper siting and regulation of private onsite wastewater disposal systems and stormwater management in accordance with town, county and state laws and regulations.
- 1.2 Provide coordination, information, education and assistance to local municipalities in managing municipal solid waste, reduction, reuse, recycling, and proper disposal of hazardous materials.
- 1.3 Conserve our waters, air, prime farmlands, and other natural resources.

Goal 2: *Provide adequate access to quality educational and recreational facilities for all county residents.*

Objectives:

- 2.1 Support local school districts, technical colleges, universities and community libraries in their efforts to increase community education opportunities and accessibility.
- 2.2 Support quality and accessible parks and recreational facilities and services and maintain dedicated open space for all residents.

Goal 3: *Utilities, community facilities, and related services will be provided in a cost-efficient and coordinated manner to maintain high quality infrastructure, county facilities and service delivery to meet the needs of residents.*

Objectives:

- 3.1 Provide road maintenance, emergency services including sheriff's patrol and investigation, emergency management and dispatch, and related health and human services programs in a fair, cost-effective manner that meets the growing and changing needs of all residents.
- 3.2 Promote the use of existing public facilities, and managed expansion to those facilities, to serve future development whenever possible.
- 3.3 Plan for utilities and community facilities concurrently with land use development to ensure efficiency and avoid conflicts.
- 3.4 Explore alternative funding sources for the maintenance and enhancement of our utilities and community facilities.

St. Croix County Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey Report Results, 2008:

- The top services/facilities rated as excellent or good were:
 - County office facilities (76 percent)
 - County parks (75 percent), and
 - Public schools (71 percent).
- These facilities are utilized by most county residents, with only 10-13 percent providing a "don't know" response.

- 3.5 Provide the appropriate level of community services, facilities and practices within the county, while striving for a low tax levy and maintaining the rural character of the county.
- 3.6 Ensure a state-of-the-art electrical, technological and communication infrastructure necessary to sustain a diverse economy and to support our communities, schools, emergency responders, services, and residents.
- 3.7 Encourage public and private utilities to site, construct and maintain utilities in cooperation with local municipalities and in a manner that is compatible with community plans and expectations.

Policies

General Utility and Community Facility

- 1.1 When development occurs, it should be done in a manner that allows for the most cost-effective and efficient provision of infrastructure and services by the municipality and/or county.
- 1.2 Broaden local government knowledge of official mapping as a means of preserving rights-of-way for future roads, parks, utilities, and public infrastructure.
- 1.3 Pursue the provision of joint services with local municipalities and neighboring counties when it will result in better services and/or cost savings.

County Facilities

- 2.1 Continue to provide public facilities and equipment that meet the county's needs and provide adequate service to the public.

Water/Wastewater

- 3.1 Work with local municipalities and state agencies to promote the proper approval process, placement, and monitoring of new and replacement on-site wastewater systems and water wells, appropriate maintenance and replacement of failing older systems and wells as a means to protect public health and ground water quality.
- 3.2 Preserve existing private on-site wastewater systems by continuing the maintenance program which tracks pumping records and notifies owners for required inspections and/or pumping.
- 3.3 Encourage property owners to test their drinking water annually or at least once every three years. Water testing kits are available at the County Planning and Zoning Department, Hudson; Land & Water Conservation Department, Baldwin; Public Health Department, New Richmond; or through private labs. A fee may apply.
- 3.4 Support local development and updates to sewer service area plans for municipalities as required by WI Department of Natural Resources.
- 3.5 Encourage local wellhead protection ordinances, based on sound engineering practices.
- 3.6 Identify areas with critical water quality issues and support appropriate regulation and remediation efforts.
- 3.7 Encourage water/sewer planning for large subdivisions in rural areas, which considers the potential for future connections, densification, and common on-site wastewater treatment facilities. Develop alternatives and models for large rural developments.

Stormwater Management

- 4.1 Keep local communities abreast of changing stormwater management planning requirements and encourage communities to prepare management plans.
- 4.2 Continue to study and address stormwater flooding, road washout problems, and ice damming as identified in *St. Croix County's All Hazards Mitigation Plan's* vulnerability assessment.
- 4.3 Pursue hazard mitigation funding to acquire or relocate structures and properties most at risk of major flood damage when the opportunity arises and/or following a flood event in which significant damage occurs.

Solid Waste and Recycling

- 5.1 St. Croix County will continue to serve as the Responsible Unit for its 26 member municipalities to implement the state recycling laws, expand education, information, special collections and related services for recycling.
- 5.2 Local municipalities and/or residents will continue to be responsible for private curbside or drop-off sites for solid waste and recycling collection and disposal. The county will continue to provide support.
- 5.3 Promote continuation and strengthening of recycling and household hazardous waste collection programs.
- 5.4 Support establishment of municipal composting programs.

Communication and Power Distribution

- 6.1 Encourage regional and local discussion and planning for telecommunications, broadband availability, network connectivity, and other related technologies, with the impact on public safety and Next Generation 911 demands.
- 6.2 Continue to involve and coordinate agencies, organizations and municipalities in emergency communication planning, training and exercises for the County; further define their role during a disaster as part of established Emergency Operations Planning procedures.
- 6.3 Increase preparedness of campgrounds and resorts to severe weather by: (a) promoting use of all hazards (weather) radios; (b) requiring the provision of emergency information to patrons; and (c) requiring new campgrounds or resorts to identify a severe weather shelter.
- 6.4 Continue to work toward countywide compliance with the National Incident Management System for emergency service providers and municipalities in the County. Explore options to integrate NIMS into local emergency operating planning efforts if feasible.
- 6.5 Continue public education efforts regarding emergency preparedness planning.
- 6.6 Encourage local utilities to pursue hazard mitigation funding to replace aging power lines and add substations to further mitigate the potential of power outages and increase the dependability of power service.

St. Croix County Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey Report Results, 2008:

- Emergency dispatch (59 percent) ranked as excellent or good
- The dispatch service had a 33 percent rate of "don't know" responses indicating about a third of county residents have not needed dispatch services.

Education

- 7.1 Engage school districts, CESAs, and other educational institutions in the comprehensive planning process.
- 7.2 Promote and assist in the development of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plans and their implementation.
- 7.3 Encourage coordination between educational institutions to foster the sharing of data and the pursuit of common goals.

St. Croix County Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey Report Results, 2008:

- Public libraries (58 percent) ranked as excellent or good
- Public libraries had a low 10 percent rate of “don’t know” responses indicating the majority of county residents have visited the libraries.

- 7.4 Encourage the continued coordination of community education in the County.

Parks and Recreation

- 8.1 The County, consistent with the St. Croix County Outdoor Recreation Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, will maintain a system of parks, trails and natural and recreation areas which together with federal, state and local parks, and natural and recreation areas provide accessible outdoor recreation and open space systems for county residents.
- 8.2 Encourage and support projects involving citizens and government, non-profit or other private organizations such as Kinnickinnic Land Trust, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Pheasants Forever, etc., that conserve and protect the use and conservation of outdoor recreation resources.
- 8.3 Increase public and local government knowledge of St. Croix County’s many recreational resources and related plans, so these assets can be reflected in planning, tourism, and marketing efforts.

Public Safety

- 9.1 Provide efficient and cost-effective public road maintenance and snow plowing, sheriff’s patrol and investigation and emergency management and dispatch services for county residents.

- 9.2 Continue to promote formal mutual aid agreements between communities and agencies for public safety and response, including the provision of public works support and policies pertaining to billing rates, required training, and liabilities.

- 9.3 Maintain and periodically update the St. Croix County All Hazards Mitigation and pursue grant funding for multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness projects, such as communication and warning systems, specialized mapping, flood mitigation, educational efforts, and sheltering.

St. Croix County Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey Report Results, 2008:

- Other well-regarded services rated good or excellent in the County include:
 - Sheriff services (64 percent)
 - Recycling programs (61 percent) and
 - County road maintenance (61 percent)
- Road maintenance had the lowest percent of “don’t know” responses, only 1 percent. Indicating a high level of familiarity and satisfaction with the county road system.
- At 8 percent, recycling had the second lowest level of “don’t know” responses, indicating a high level of familiarity with those programs also.

- 9.4 Encourage partnerships between the private and public sectors for emergency preparedness to identify and protect essential resources while ensuring our businesses and organizations are prepared.
- 9.5 Develop and maintain maps of hazard risks and critical facilities in the County for hazard mitigation, emergency response, and recovery planning.
- 9.6 Encourage inter-state emergency response and law enforcement agreements between Wisconsin and Minnesota to ensure our residents and communities are receiving the fastest, most affordable services available.
- 9.7 Continue to encourage coordination between Wisconsin and Minnesota so that related health emergency policies and procedures are consistent and compatible, such as the manner in which pharmaceuticals will be distributed if a pandemic flu outbreak should occur.
- 9.8 Update County mobile home regulations to require new mobile home parks to identify per formal agreement a storm shelter or construct a new storm shelter for residents. Require new and encourage existing mobile home parks in unincorporated areas to have emergency plans which will be on-file with the County.
- 9.9 Promote the use of the storm shelter/safe room initiative which subsidizes the installation of safe rooms or shelters for mobile homes and mobile home parks.
- 9.10 Continue annual review of the emergency action plans for the County dams and ensure that the contact and telephone lists are up-to-date. Whenever updates, send copies of the emergency action plan to the local municipalities to help keep residents informed. Copies of the Glen Hills Dam plans should be sent to Dunn County Emergency Management and the Village of Downing.
- 9.11 Develop and maintain a resource directory for use in times of disaster by coordinating agencies (e.g., Aging and Disability Resource Center coordinates transportation services). Such a directory could be expanded to include standard requirements for the sharing of equipment and billing rates.

Health and Human Services

- 10.1 Provide support to adults, people who have a disability and their families through the Aging and Disability Resource Center which serves as a central source of information, assistance, support and access to community resources.
- 10.2 Provide high quality, timely alcohol/drug abuse and mental health services to individuals and their families within the County.
- 10.3 Provide treatment, rehabilitation, therapy and support to County residents with chronic mental illnesses supplemented by information, referral and resource programs.
- 10.4 Support efforts by Public Health to maintain St. Croix County's excellent health rating among Wisconsin counties. Support Public Health initiatives such as health choices and healthy lifestyles.

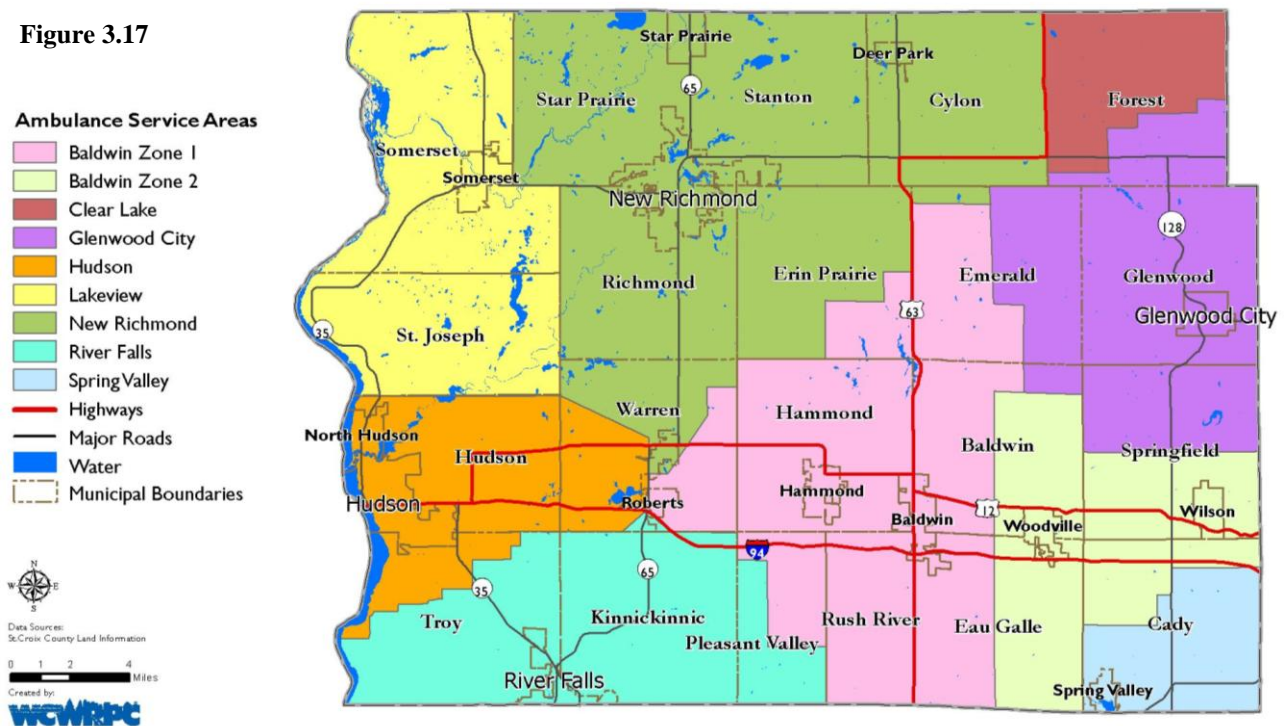
St. Croix County Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey Report Results, 2008:

- Several services had lower excellent or good ratings but also high percentages of "don't know" responses; these services are not generally used by all of the general public
- Among those who did respond most rated these services as excellent or good
- County court services (41 percent; 45 percent "don't know")
- Public health (39 percent; 46 percent "don't know")
- Aging/disability resources (27 percent; 56 percent "don't know")
- County nursing home (21 percent; 61 percent "don't know")

County Facility Maps

Ambulance Service Areas

Figure 3.17



source: St. Croix County Land Information Office

School Districts

